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Private Citizen

Testimony for CO2 Budget Trading Program Regulation

Good evening, my name is Brian Dugas, and I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to provide testimony for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. While I think it is a step in the right direction, it clearly is just the beginning of a movement that is long overdue.

The Pennsylvania Constitution states in Article I Section 27: The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

As elected Trustees of these resources, and representatives of the residents of this state I am here to request that you make this initiative your priority.

I am a veteran, educator, outdoor enthusiast, and active volunteer for my community and the country. I have just completed serving two years in Tanzania, East Africa with the Peace Corps, and was evacuated in March of this year due to the COVID pandemic. I have had the misfortune of observing the effect of climate change on the environment in our country, and in Africa, where the lack of rainfall has devastated crops causing widespread hunger, suffering and increased poverty. According to the farmers there, this change in rainfall amounts started about twenty years ago and has progressively gotten worse over the years. When asked what they could do to change it, their accusations were turned right back on me as a representative of the west. They know full well that the biggest contributors to climate change are the western countries, and I am here today to ask you to start taking responsibility for what this state contributes to the global gas emissions, and more importantly to take action.

As an educator it's fascinating for me to see the youth of the world taking action on something that the adults either don't want to see, or worse, don't care about. The young people I served with in the Peace Corps and the students I taught in classrooms are fed up with the denials and are demanding action. Politically, I have always considered myself neutral having been a supporter of both parties over the years, and registering Independent most recently, but that time is coming to a close. This issue is important enough to drive me, and many young people into the ranks of whichever party has the intestinal fortitude to take the lead.

While this initiative is a step in the right direction, it is far from the total action needed to make a significant change in the world. And yet even this halfway measure to reduce emissions from the biggest contributors in the state are resisted by the very trustees who are required by the Pennsylvania Constitution to conserve and maintain our environment for the benefit of all.

We are all watching. The future generations are watching, and they are actively engaged. The day when politics and money can control the future of the environment are coming to an end. And this state needs to be on the right side of the issue when it does.

I am asking that for the sake of our children, and our children's children - to not only approve this initiative, but dedicate any funds gained, towards other clean energy programs, and beyond that, to make saving our planet a priority in every decision that you make as you are representing the people of the Commonwealth.

Along with the rest of the world our children are listening and watching, and we all look forward to your decision to support this Initiative.

Thank you.